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ABSTRACT

To be effective the community college must meet community needs. Before these needs can be met, they must be systematically identified. Their identification, however, hinges on an appropriate definition of community. Prior to presenting methods for identifying community needs, the problems surrounding the defining of "community" are explored. The community constructs of Hendrix, Treloff, Sumption, Hallenbeck and Verner, and Blackwell (portrayed in model form) serve as keys to community definition. Three methods (community advisory committee, community coordinating council, and community study) of sampling community input are then described. It was not intended to present these three methods as alternatives to be selected by any college as it seeks to measure its community. Rather, they were presented as three procedures by which different kinds of information and service could be made available to the community college with the recommendation that each be applied as circumstances permitted. Use of the community survey technique remained the single most effective method of broadening the college mission to help provide a more comprehensive base for developing a community's human resources. (AL)

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COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A Paper

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Dr. J. Malik

In Partial Requirement

for

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by

Keith Robin

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
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CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION

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INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about the function of the community college in today's complex society. Gleazer (6), Medsker (18), and Thornton (32) are only three of many writers who have developed bases upon which the community college can operate. Kintzer suggests in his Profile of the Ideal Community College that the college should provide quality programs for a diversified student body by including:

> "opportunities for academic degree-bound students;
> opportunities for those who have aptitude and interest for semi-professional trade training;
> opportunities for students wishing to continue in general studies for at least two years beyond high school;
> opportunities for adults who want cultural, recreational and vocational classes on a part-time basis."
>
> (13:478)

Whatever list is used, whoever is writing, there is usually mention of similar features. The essential objective of the community college is accepted as contributing to the development of the individual human dignity or self-realization within the community.

How can this best be accomplished? What means can the college use to assist in this development? Knotek suggests the community college has an obligation to -

> " become a center of community life .....
> provide educational services for all age groups ...
> provide leadership and coordination within

> the capabilities of the college... contribute to and promote the cultural and intellectual and social life of the college district community."
> (15:2)

This too seems acceptable! But again the question, how can this best be done? Medsker supplies one answer when he writes,

> "Whatever form the community college takes, its purpose is educational service to the entire community, and this purpose requires of it a variety of functions and programs ... it will attempt to meet the total post-high-school needs of its community."
> (19:63)

Shaw says,

> "a junior college becomes a community college, only when its multiple goals reflect the needs and directions of its community."
> (29:3)

In order that the college can fulfill its goal, it must work to meet the needs of the community. Gores writes this way,

> " the genius of a community college is that it responds to life like it is, where it is." (7:1)

In order that the community college can meet these needs, it must first determine what they are. A program is successful to the extent that it addresses itself to priority community problems and contributes to their resolution.

> "Parameters of success are:
> 1. The variety of people being served (the breadth of the college constituency.)
> 2. The amount of involvement by people of the community in planning and operating programs directed by them.

> 3. The amount of community support for the program and for the institution."
>
> (20:4)

It is the hypothesis in this paper that one way in which the community college can determine the needs of the community is through the use of the community survey. Then the professional educators may be able to organize and program within the college to help meet these determined needs.

THE COMMUNITY

While it is relatively easy to find agreement among writers as to legitimate functions of the college, and even some agreement that the assessment of community needs is a desirable means of helping to fulfill these functions, there doesn't seem to be agreement as to the definition of the community, especially as it effects the community college.

> "The community is a social dynamic, a process of producing change in its members . . . the community is a complex of information, habits, techniques, institutions and standards that in their intercommunication make individual minds tick."
>
> (2:7)

Keim lists four criteria which should be considered in defining a community - population characteristics, institutional structure, the value system - what is held to be important, and the economic base. (20:51)

The Hendrix study, conducted under a grant from the

U.S. Office of Education, and released in June, 1967, evaluated 100 junior colleges to find the interrelationships that existed among college environments, faculty, students, administrators and the community characteristics involved therein. Hendrix defined his community by measuring a series of "external determinants" which he listed as: social class, marital status, age, number of young families, mobility, housing, rural and urban area, student preferences in scholarship and intellectual environment, sociability, and faculty preferences which helped to determine the size of the liberal arts dimensions of the college and the nature of the student body. (11:54) See figure 1, page 5.

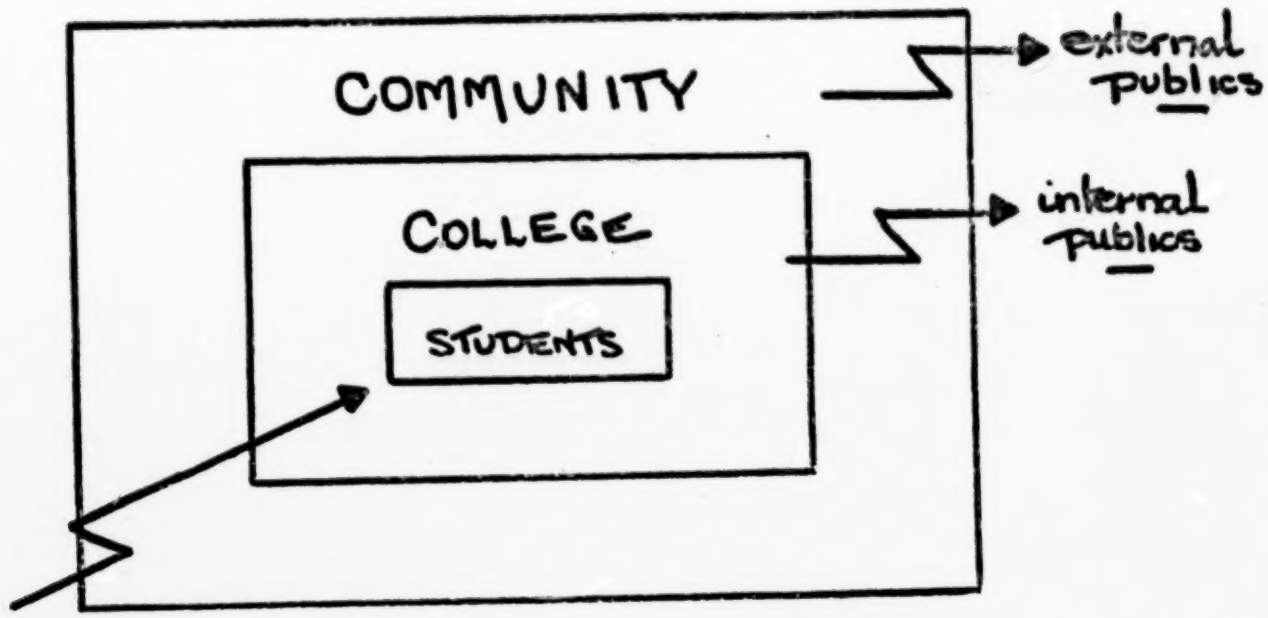
Alexander Streloff, in writing a guide to public relations for junior colleges defined public relations as those college-initiated activities which:

> "further public understanding of education, and provide college authorities with an understanding of public opinion in order to help the college improve the educational functions of society." (30:1)

He went on to divide his 'community' into the internal publics and the external publics as shown; figure 2, page 6.

Sumption writes about school-community relations and developed a series of essential principles necessary for the maintenance of school-community relationships which are effective. He considered six factors were significant in making communities different. Figure 3, page 7.

The COMMUNITY - as visualized by Hendrix



the student enters the college from the community, contributes to the college environment and is affected both by internal and external environment determinants.

Figure 1.

as visualized by

THE COMMUNITY – Alexander STRELOFF

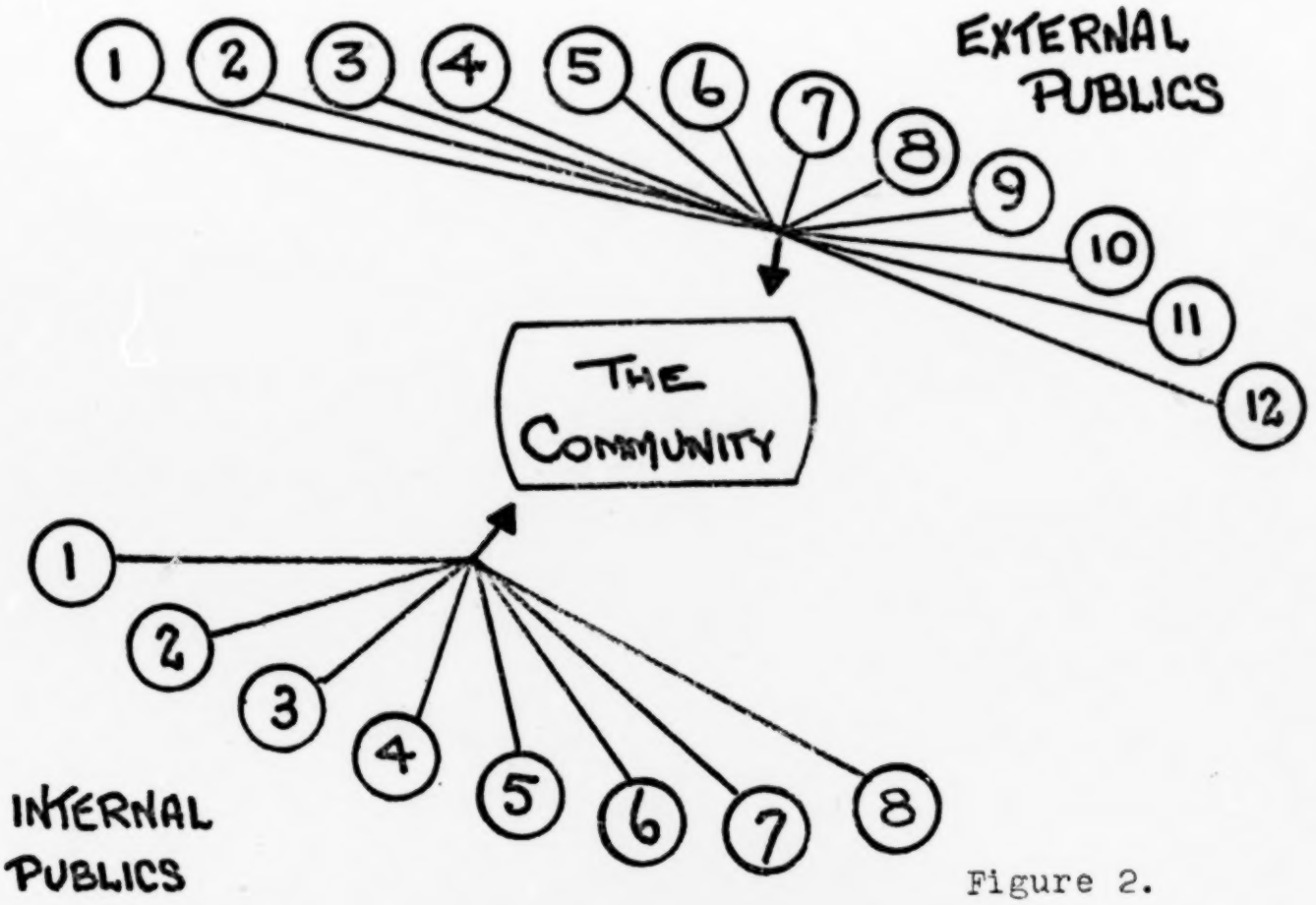


Figure 2.

Internal Publics

1. Governing Board
2. Administration and staff
3. Faculty
4. Students - full time
5. Students - part time
6. Students - adult, cont.ed.
7. Parents
8. Alumni.

*****

External Publics

1. High School students
2. High School Faculty
3. Four year college faculty
4. Four year college students
5. Business groups.
6. Labor organizations
7. Public media.
8. Spectators - public events
9. Government - state
10. Government -.federal
11. Government - local
12. Community groups.

*****

The COMMUNITY - as visualized by Sumption

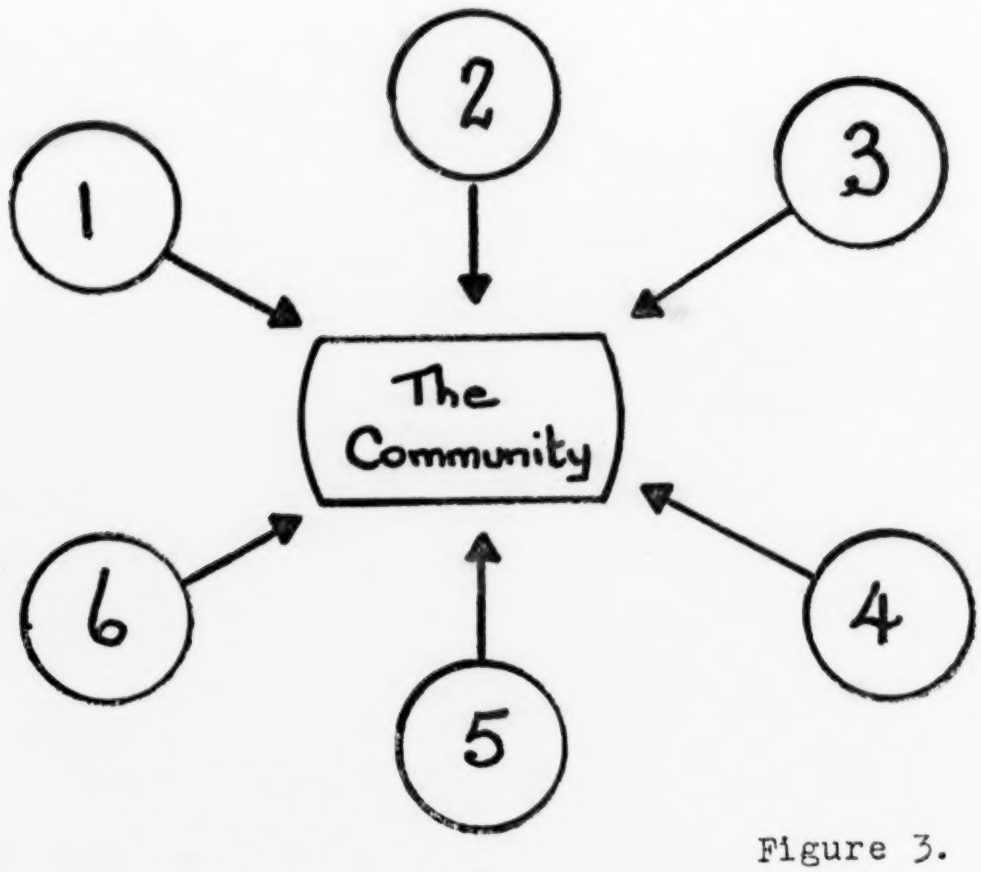


Figure 3.

1. tradition and nationality backgrounds.
2. sets of values which the community holds.
3. economic bases.
4. geographic features.
5. social structure.
6. political structure within the community.

***** (31:5)

In analyzing the community Sumption would ascertain:

" - the educational level of the people in the community;
- which organizations are interested in education;
- the development of the community power structure;
- which communications media are available."

(31:130)

Hallenbeck, Verner, et al studied the community in relation to adult education and concluded that the community is of major importance in adult education; that the knowledge of a community is an essential element in understanding the problems and potentialities of an adult education program. (9:17) These writers suggest that there are social factors of a community which will influence adult education. Included among these factors are - the development of urbanism, cultural diversity, organization within the community, composition and distribution of the population, population mobility, and social stratification. (9:9)

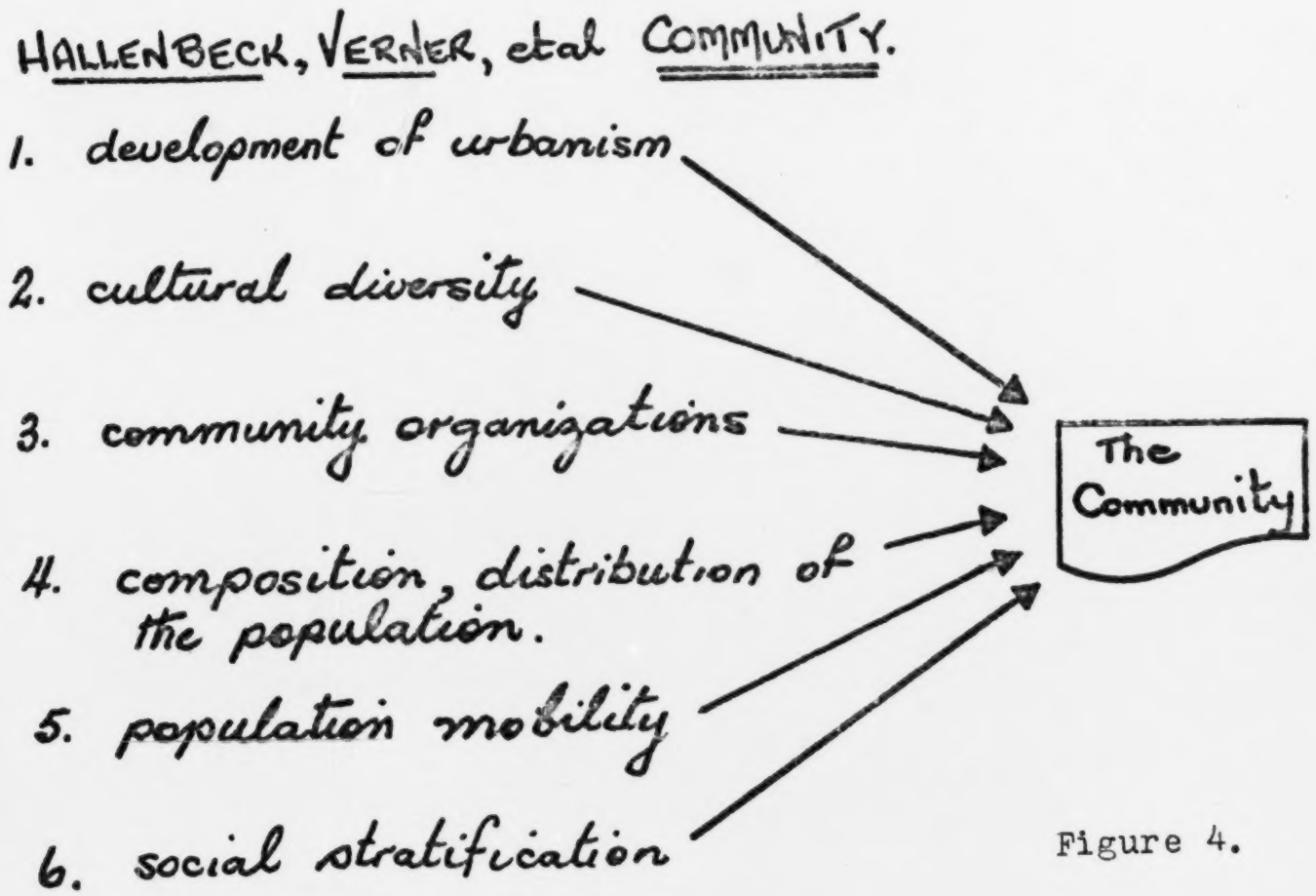


Figure 4.

Gordon Blackwell developed a sociological framework for community understanding. He included seven dimensions of the community. (12:17) See Figure 5, Page 9.

The COMMUNITY - as visualized by Blackwell

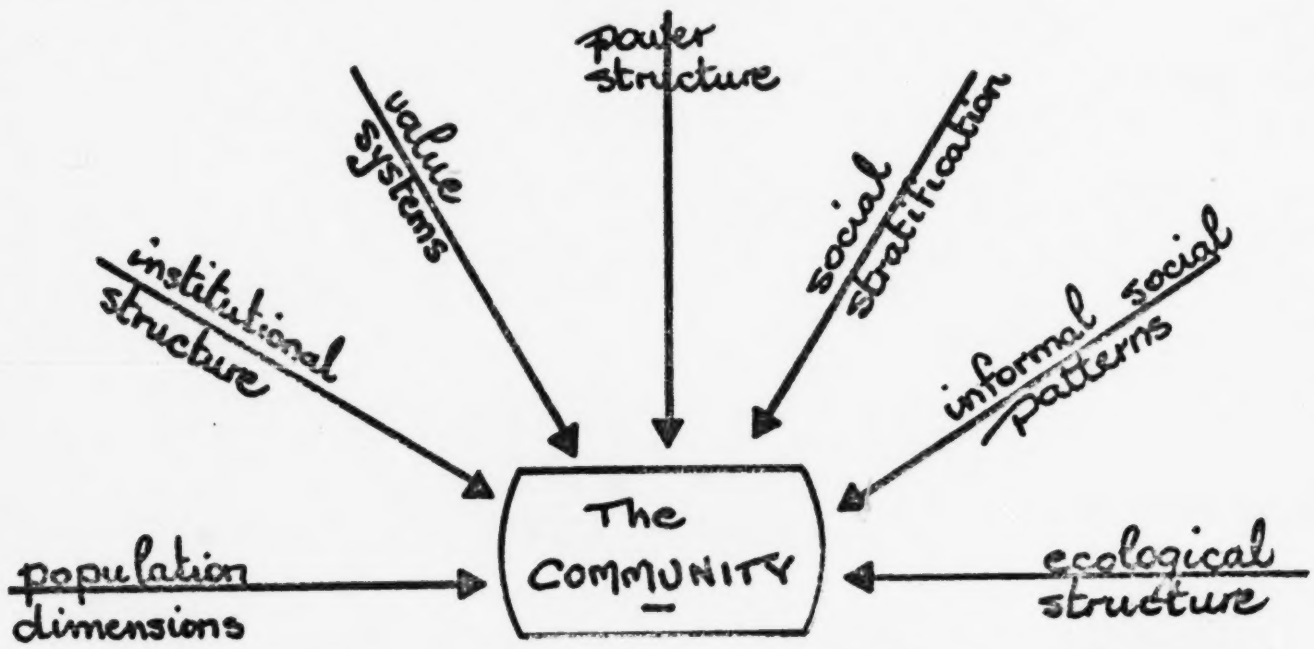


figure 5.

The list would not be complete without some mention of the basic sociological distinction between the GEMEINSCHAFT emphasizing the fundamental human relationships of the community - characterized by such factors as acquaintances, sympathy, confidence and interdependence; and GESELLSCHAFT emphasizing the societal relationships which reveal strangeness, antipathy, mistrust and independence. (22:63)

From this summary what conclusions can be reached,

and what relationship does this have to the issue of determining basic needs for the community college? It seems obvious that the community, as we have described it, is a very complex collection of factors and that any careful analysis will take proper recognizance of many of these factors if the results are to be reliable.

A second conclusion is that the community, by its very nature, is highly individual; as a result one can expect that a survey properly designed and conducted can be expected to yield different results in different communities. The community of the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City, a part of the community college system of the State University of New York is going to be different from the community of Chicago Circle Campus of the University of Illinois, located just west of the 'loop' and designed to handle an ultimate enrollment of 23,000 students. Similarly, the community of El Centro College in Dallas, Texas, a department store college designed to accomodate 2000 f.t.e. students in downtown Texas is entirely different from the community of the Lethbridge Community College, also designed to handle an enrollment of 2000 f.t.e. students, but located in a semi-rural, agriculture service area in southern Alberta.

The community college which truly attempts to meet the needs of the local area must expect to develop programs unique to the needs of the area.

MEETING THE NEEDS

Over twenty five years ago the Educational Policies Commission projected that needs of five different groups of students would need to be served by the junior-community colleges. As listed, these groups were:

> "a. people who wish to prepare for various technical and semi-professional occupations;
> b. persons who profit from further training in the occupations for which high school provides only basic preparation;
> c. preparatory students who plan to enter professional training in universities or technical and liberal arts colleges;
> d. those who desire to round out their general education before entering employment or becoming homemakers;
> e. adults and older youths, mostly employed, who wish to continue their education on a part-time basis during their free hours."
> (16:138)

Dean, in his Community College For Tomorrow, notes "valid purposes of the public community college can emerge only from the characteristics of the local society and the needs of its individuals." (3:48)

The community college remains an institution through which large numbers of people can be reached. Whether the function of the community college is to help people live better through providing a mental flexibility, through developing expanded interests, or through offering opportunities to change individual sets of values, the college should remain open to as much of the community as possible,for as many hours as possible, and with as broad an educational experience as possible.

Much has been written about the adult education, the continuing education, the community services function of the community college. However, if one is to consider the broad scope of the community college function, it becomes very difficult to separate the adult education - community services area from the other programs offered. The nature and scope of community services is dictated by the environment in which the college is located - "there is no general agreement among practitioners as to what programs, courses and activities fall within the boundaries of the community services concept." Myran goes on,

> "community services is concerned with identifying unrealized potentialities and unmet needs, drawing together resources in the college and in the community, and creating appropriate educational programs." (21:12)

Liveright discusses the philosophy behind adult education in saying,

> "every person must be offered an opportunity to develop fully his unique capabilities as an individual, family member, worker, and citizen to preserve and strengthen the free society. (17:5)

Note the similarity between adult education and community services. Griffiths does find a distinction in terms of the central function of the sponsoring institution. He suggests that where education is the prime function, the goal must be in terms of the change in knowledge that has

occurred; where service becomes the central function, the skills of the agent are made available without any pretense that he is actually trying to teach. In Griffiths' view, the extent to which an institution has education as its major function will indicate whether service activities tend to assume a secondary importance. (8:4)

Obviously, not all writers would agree with this view, many preferring to emphasize the similarities that exist in the two areas of educational service. Edmund Gleazer discusses dimensions of junior college planning and says,

> "a system of higher education should recognize individual differences and the social worth of a wide range of interests, capacities, aptitudes and types of intelligence ... a system of higher education should give to every individual the opportunity to continue appropriate education up to the point of optimum development ... the sine qua non of the community college is the orientation of its program to the needs and interests of all the people in the community who can profit by its offerings."
>
> (1:2)

One is hard pressed to detect basic differences in the underlying philosophy of the three - community services, adult education, community college. The conclusion that must surely be reached is that the functional community college is concerned with the long term needs of all the people in the area that it serves. Flexibility and creativity are key words in describing the community college function - flexibility and creativity to

provide for the varied educational needs of all the people. Arbitrary distinctions between full-time and part-time students; credit and non-credit courses; day and evening classes become merely administrative convenience. As someone has said, "all that's different in the evening is that the lights go on."

COLLEGE - COMMUNITY INTERACTION

The growth of community colleges in recent years, combined with greatly improved travel arrangements has tended to place a college within easy travel distance for most citizens in the country. This is potentially an exciting development; - however it places a responsibility on the college to know its community and its people, and upon the people to know their college. The traditional 'town-gown' split in which community residents view the academicians with suspicion, and are viewed with disdain and aloofness in return, is no longer acceptable.

Newman says,

> "the allocation of the educational functions of society to a single separate institution suggests that such an institution must have a unique responsibility. This assumption becomes highly suspect when we look at three important aspects -
> a. we conceive of education as 'preparation' and separated from productive work,
> b. we separate the 'school environment' fromthe non-instructional life of the community,
> c. we construe teaching as a specialized occupation, isolated from the world of actions and decisions." (22:75)

> "Today's need is to involve more colleges in an 'open double-door' effort that will see total college commitment in the community and a significant involvement by the community in the college."
> (29:3)

Shaw and Cummisky go on to suggest three ways in which the community involvement can be developed - community advisory committees, community coordinating councils, and a community study.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The use of the advisory committee is not new. It has long been considered a desirable means of developing community interaction with the workings of the educational institution. Undoubtedly, the community advisory group, working with the college staff members, can do much to help plan new curricula and to update existing programs. Too frequently, however, the duties of the advisory committee seems limited to 'rubber-stamp' approval of what the college authorities had already decided, or else the committee seeks to supplant the authority of the legally constituted governing board. Wing and Sheperd, in an analysis of the quality and quantity or parental involvement and community participation in Title I, E.S.E.A. programs, point out a further problem with advisory committees. 92% of all committees considered had school administrators as at least one member of the committee; 90% had teachers as at least one member. Most districts relied on appointments

of some members of the committee; many districts relied totally on appointment by school officials. (33) Some question must be raised as to the breadth of the base of the committee selections and the representation that actually occurred under these conditions.

There is little doubt that the advisory committee can be a great success or a disastrous failure.

> "a. it can represent the college to its constituency,
> b. it can represent the community to the college,
> c. it can add to the voice of the chief administrative officer as he attempts to develop the program of the institution."
> (28:9)

Committee responsibilities are many but some of the areas in which an advisory committee can be of assistance include:

- identifying community needs and resources;
- implementing, promoting and evaluating services;
- developing responsive programs and services; recruiting students and qualified faculty;
- providing direct financial assistance and support in college budget requests;
- assisting in the follow-up placement of students.

The ultimate success of any advisory committee will depend heavily upon the intent of the college in appointing

the committee, upon the extent of representation of the groups affected, and finally, upon the willingness of the college to be guided by recommendations of the committee.

COMMUNITY COORDINATING COUNCIL

If one can accept the view that education occurs elsewhere than in a classroom, if one can accept the view that education can involve others than the professional educators, and one must in the community college business, then it becomes reasonable to suggest that education within a particular community can be planned effectively by a broadl - based coordinating council of citizens - to suggest that education is the concern and function of the total community, not just the educational 'experts'. Over the past five years community involvement in the social planning and programming process has emerged as a significant trend.

> "Understanding the process of community involvement is basic to establishing realistic goals, developing meaningful programs and reaching communities within a changing social context."
> (24:40)

Although the author, Clarence Pendleton, was primarily concerned in his article with recreation programming, it seems equally applicable to the educational field.

All two-year college programs must be community-oriented if they are to relate realistically to the community needs. Decisions as to what the college ought to

be, and what it ought to be doing are an obligation which cannot rightfully be sidestepped.

> "Concern for and service to its surrounding area should be the prime consideration for the community-junior college, second only to its reason for existence, and that is to provide meaningful educational experiences for the youth and adults it serves." (4:49)

Some concern must be expressed for the views of any organization by the several groups affected. Paetz' study of five Oregon colleges identified educational values by students, faculty, and parents. Poetz found that the degree of importance placed on values such as cost, quality of instruction, reputation of the college, and vocational training opportunities were not always the same by all publics. (26)

In a similar study by Rice, fundamental differences in the perceived importance of purpose from a list of 17 possible purposes compiled from several sources, by students, teachers, and college administrators were observed. (27)

From these two studies, and others like them, it is possible to conclude that there is need for a kind of collective educational partnership, involving students and faculty, administrators and board members, parents and public who can integrate the efforts of family, school and community.

Martin Essex sums up the need,

> "The idea of a democratic educational system implies that citizens have a responsibility not only to finance the schools, but also to participate in determining educational goals and objectives, build curriculum that will truly meet the needs."
> (5:34)

The advantages of an educational coordinating council are numerous and well-established. Some of the areas in which the council can assist the college include the following:

- establish and maintain an up-to-date inventory of community needs and programs offered by various community agencies;
- pool resources in planning major community information and program promotion campaigns;
- offer expanded and improved in-service training for both professional and volunteer leaders;
- coordinate broad planning of cooperative and co-sponsored programs and activities;
- act as a focal point in influencing the general direction and support of the community for the college program.

COMMUNITY STUDY

In order for any college to provide a comprehensive program designed to meet the needs of the area, the college

must become aware of these needs in an accurate and reliable manner. In spite of the very useful assistance that can be gained from lay advisory committees, and in spite of the leadership that may be gained from participation in coordinating councils, the community study remains as the single most valuable method of determining the unique needs of the community.

Truman Pierce's study of controllable community characteristics related to the quality of education in New York State, 1947, still has important application to the modern community college. One of the major conclusions from his study was,

> "A successful program for building up lay understanding of good education shows promise of being the key to unlocking the capacity of a community for producing education in a manner far more effective than otherwise seems probable." (25:30)

There are numbers of authors who support the use of the community survey, albeit for a variety of reasons. Cox and Mercer consider the community survey as "a peculiarly useful device for helping teachers and patrons understand the changing orientations of school education." (2:480) Ohliger calls the community survey "the necessary component to pinpoint areas of community needs." (23:558) The sociologist viewpoint is expressed by Wiseman and Arow in,

> "a community study is an attempt to understand and describe a group of people who live in a certain geographical location, share certain institutions in common, and feel that somehow these institutions belong to them."
> (34:99)

Whatever the motive of the survey there appears to be agreement that the collection and examination of data can be a useful guide in the developing of practical recommendations for the guidance of the agency involved.

Dorothy Knoell's study of New York State attempted to find whether the existing system of tuition fees, loans and awards did truly create equal opportunity for the students in the area. She used the following goals:

> "to find out from the young people who might benefit from the new types of post-secondary school experience -
> a. what are their immediate plans for employment, military service or other activity after high school graduation;
> b. what is their perceived need for further education or training;
> c. conditions under which students would be interested in obtaining additional education in a collegiate setting;
> d. their evaluation of their high school work and work experience prior to graduation;
> e. personal and family characteristics which may be related to their aspirations and plans."
> (14:9-11)

Using a significantly different viewpoint, Hand evaluates the use of the community survey in the narrower context of program planning for adult education. He introduces such factors as community influence on individual

personality, the necessity of citizen participation to a strong democratic society, the solution of social problems within the context of community life, and the need to design educational programs to meet the unique needs of a given community. (10:iii)

Community surveys may be broad or narrow in design and scope, may involve mailed questionnaires, group or individual interviews using random sampling techniques. They may be conducted by volunteer workers or professional survey specialists and analyzed by simple paper and pencil checks or by a sophisticated computer programmed analysis. "The basic intent is to support community planning and development by better identification of individual, group and community needs, interests, resources, preferences and actions suggestions." (29:20)

CONCLUSIONS

The community college shows promise of being a dynamic, flexible and stimulating influence on the economy and culture of the community in which it is located. To do this, however, the college cannot function in an academic vacuum; it must be alert to the needs of the people in the community, it must be alive to the special contributions it can make in assisting individuals in the development of their human dignity and self-realization.

While the professional educators can, and should,

be expected to provide the academic expertise as to how this realization may be best obtained, it remains the obligation of the college to determine from the individual community what special resources are available, and what special needs are to be met.

Three methods of sampling community input have been described in this paper. However, it must be made clear that it is not the intention to present these three as alternatives to be selected by any college as it seeks to measure its community. Rather, they are presented as three procedures by which different kinds of information and service can be made available with the recommendation that each should be applied as circumstances will permit. The community survey remains as the single most effective method of broadening the college mission to help provide a more comprehensive base for the development of human resources within the community.

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